



**Testimony of Connecticut Fund for the Environment
Before the Environment Committee**

***In Support of S.B. 871 AN ACT INCREASING THE ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION***

Submitted by Roger Reynolds, Senior Attorney
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Connecticut Fund for the Environment ("CFE"), with a total membership of approximately 6,000 Connecticut members, uses law and science to defend Connecticut's air, land and water.

CFE strongly urges the passage of S.B. 871 that would give certain enforcement powers to the Department of Environmental Protection.

Predictable and consistent enforcement of state environmental laws is essential to preserve Connecticut's character and quality of life. Connecticut competes as a world class state in which to locate a business, live or raise a family. It cannot maintain this status unless there is a clear set of environmental rules that the community knows will be consistently and fairly enforced.

This bill revises the general statutes to update the amount of penalties that can be received for knowing and criminal conduct and providing false information. In recent years, DEP has taken measures to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its enforcement. Without updated tools adjusted for inflation, however, such efforts will bear no fruit. Moreover, with less agency resources for inspection and more reliance on self reporting from firms and their consultants, it is more important than ever for DEP to have authority to seek penalties against those that knowingly falsify documents to the agency.

Although there was no opposition, this bill failed to make it over the finish line in last year's legislative session. As DEP and other agencies face further cuts to their already slim operating budgets, it is more important than ever that they be given the appropriate tools for the remaining staff to operate more effectively and efficiently. Accordingly we urge your strong support in ensuring that this bill is made a priority and passed early this year.